

[Article F] Z-Gram 116

Background: During times of war the Navy has frequently relied on women in a variety of roles, from nursing and clerical responsibilities to air mechanics and signalmen. During World War II, women served as part of W.A.V.E.S., or Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service. W.A.V.E.S. were overseen by the U.S. Navy but were technically a separate entity and only active for the duration of the “emergency.” In 1948 the Women’s Armed Service Integration Act allowed women to serve as permanent members of the military, not just during war. However, this same act capped the number of women at 2% of the total number of service members and barred women from shipboard duty except as nurses.

On July 1, 1970, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt assumed duties as Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). In this position he had tremendous control over all policy issues. Similar to an Executive Order by the President of the United States, Zumwalt was able to issue far-reaching, law-altering policies through written directives, or NAVOPS. Such proclamations were nicknamed “Z-grams” during Zumwalt’s tenure as CNO. In March of 1972, both houses of Congress had passed the Equal Rights Amendment and it looked like the states were going to ratify the Amendment, which proposed banning discrimination based on gender. While the 2% cap on women in the service had been overturned in 1967, the Navy continued to ban women from shipboard service as well as many higher ranks and titles. Zumwalt recognized the changing tide and wrote, “I foresee that in the near future we may very well have authority to utilize officer and enlisted women on board ships.”

Z-Gram 116 was Zumwalt’s answer to changing policies. Issued August 7, 1972, and known as the NAVOP regarding equal rights and opportunities for women, Z-Gram 116 challenged the status quo of women’s roles in the Navy.

Important Changes Outlined:

- Women would be admitted to all enlisted ranks on a “limited” entry (small numbers)
- Women would be admitted to all Navy ROTC programs the following year
- Z-Gram 116 increased professional development opportunities by allowing women to serve in all billets (jobs), not pigeonholing them into clerical or nurse billets.
- Established a pilot program for introducing women in non-nurse capacities to ships, including USS *Sanctuary* (a hospital ship)

Zumwalt closed Z-Gram 116 with a call to action for all naval personnel: “We must actively work together in order that we may more equitably include women in our One Navy concept.” While some changes were easy to implement, the process of making the Navy more equitable would take years to achieve. In November 1972, women were assigned to USS *Sanctuary* as ship’s crewmembers, overturning the long-standing policy that women could only serve in support capacities at sea. Shortly thereafter the Navy created a video titled “Ladies Wear the Blue” to chronicle the triumphs and challenges of women at sea.

JOINT MESSAGE				UNCL 01-01-01			
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TO: ZOC

FROM: CNO (Z-126)

TO: NAVOP

UNCLAS //K05350//

EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE NAVY

1. THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION AND DEBATE WITH RESPECT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN OUR COUNTRY OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. MY POSITION WITH RESPECT TO WOMEN IN THE NAVY IS THAT THEY HAVE HISTORICALLY PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR NAVAL MISSION. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE WE CAN DO FAR MORE THAN WE HAVE IN THE PAST IN ACCORDING WOMEN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR EXTENSIVE TALENTS AND TO ACHIEVE FULL PROFESSIONAL STATUS. MOREOVER, THE IMMINENCE OF AN ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE HAS HEIGHTENED THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN AS A VITAL PERSONNEL RESOURCE. I EXPECT THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE WE MAY VERY WELL HAVE AUTHORITY TO UTILIZE OFFICER AND ENLISTED WOMEN ON BOARD SHIPS. IN VIEW OF THIS POSSIBILITY WE MUST BE IN A POSITION TO UTILIZE WOMEN'S TALENTS TO ACHIEVE THE SIZE NAVY WE NEED UNDER AN ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE CONCEPT AND STILL MAINTAIN THE SEA SHORE ROTATION GOALS FOR ALL NAVAL PERSONNEL REGARDS WHICH WE HAVE BEEN WORKING TO THIS END

DRAFTED: OP-00

TEST: STANDARD NAVOP 11-1

RE: 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11 11-11-11

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